Remarks

Claims 1-3, 5-20, and 23-27 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 14-16 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Reeves et al. (US 5,491,015) in view of Fetterman (5,178,176). The Examiner cites Reeves to teach an article "for interaction with hands or feet . . . (which broadly encompasses medical drapes)".

Applicants respectfully disagree. Reeves discloses a slip control article for use on equipment such as gymnastic equipment, and tools or sports equipment with leather grips.

Further, Reeves discloses protrusions made of a hard, durable material (such as polycarbonate) which are incompressible and non-collapsible. See, e.g., Col. 6, lines 30-50. In addition, Reeves describes a two-step process wherein the polycarbonate (stems of hard thermoplastic material) is applied to the polyurethane backing, i.e., resulting in a material that is not integrally formed. See, e.g., Col. 7, line 5-20

Thus, while the materials disclosed by Reeves are thermoplastic, they cannot be considered to be elastomeric materials. Rather, modification of Reeves to use elastomeric materials would not accomplish Reeves' objectives of high friction with high durability for the applications contemplated.

The Examiner acknowledges that Reeves fails to teach the coefficient of friction in wet and dry conditions and relies on Fetterman for that disclosure. Fetterman discloses a tip for a crutch made of polyurethane and/or rubber with varying coefficients of friction. As discussed above, Reeves requires protrusions made of a hard material such as polycarbonate. One skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify the stem materials of Reeves with the materials provided in Fetterman. Thus, Fetterman is not properly combinable with Reeves and further does not cure the deficiencies of Reeves.

The Office Action further rejected claims 8-13, 17-18, 20 and 25-27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Reeves et al. (US 5,491,015) in view of Fetterman (5,178,176) and further in view of Crawley et al. (US 5,948,707). The Office Action recognizes that Reeves and Fetterman fail to disclose stems on both sides of the substrate or the stem density.

The addition of Crawley does not address any of the deficiencies of Reeves and Fetterman as applied to the claims. For that reason alone, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 8-13, 17-18, 20 and 25-27 are patentable over the combination of Reeves in view of Fetterman and Crawley.

In light of the complete absence of any teaching or suggestion of elastomeric stems in either the Reeves or Fetterman disclosures, Crawley is inadequate to render the subject matter of the rejected claims obvious. As discussed above, the Examiner has failed to point to any motivation in Crawley to combine the references to come up with integrally formed stems of elastomeric material that have an aspect ratio of at least 1.25.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the rejected claims are patentable over Reeves et al. (US 5,491,015) in view of Fetterman (5,178,176) and further in view of Crawley et al. (US 5,948,707). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections based on the above references are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy M. Lambert

Nancy M. Lambert
Registration No. 44,856
Attorney for Applicants

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Office of Intellectual Property Counsel
3M Innovative Properties Company
P.O. Box 33427
St. Paul, Minnesota 55133-3427
(651) 733-2180
Facsimile: (651) 736-3833

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